

LONE WOLF

AND

子連れ狼

CUB

VOLUME 24

IN THESE
SMALL HANDS

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA



子連水狼

LONE WOLF AND CUB



story
KAZUO KOIKE
art
GOSEKI KOJIMA



DARK HORSE MANGA™

translation
DANA LEWIS
lettering & retouch
DIGITAL CHAMELEON

cover illustration
MATT WAGNER

publisher
MIKE RICHARDSON

editor
TIM ERVIN-GORE

assistant editor
JEREMY BARLOW

consulting editor
TOREN SMITH for **STUDIO PROTEUS**

book design
DARIN FABRICK

art director
MARK COX

Published by Dark Horse Comics, Inc., in association
with MegaHouse and Koeke Shoin Publishing Company

Dark Horse Comics, Inc.
10946 SE Main Street, Milwaukee, WI 53222
www.darkhorse.com

First edition: August 2002
ISBN: 978-1-56571-796-3

1 5 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Printed in Canada

Long Wolf and Calf Will Be, In These Small Hands

Art and story ©1995, 2002 Koeke Shoin & Goshu Koeke. Cover art © 2002 Matt Wagner. All other material
© 2002 Dark Horse Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. English translation rights arranged with RICHIE SHOGUN
PUBLISHING CO., LTD. TOKYO. Originally published in Japan in 1995 by RICHIE SHOGUN PUBLISHING CO.,
LTD., TOKYO. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, without the
express written permission of the copyright holders. Names, characters, places, and incidents featured in
this publication either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any
resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, institutions, or locales without notice
is coincidental. Dark Horse Comics® and the Dark Horse logo are trademarks of
Dark Horse Comics, Inc., registered in various categories and countries. All rights reserved.

To find a comics shop in your area, call the
Comic Shop Locator Service toll-free at 1-888-286-4226.

IN THESE
SMALL
HANDS

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA

子
連
れ
狼



VOLUME

24

A NOTE TO READERS

Lone Wolf and Cub is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yurushi o* (please forgive us)!

LONE WOLF AND CUB



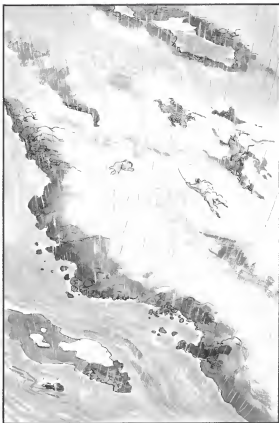
TABLE OF CONTENTS

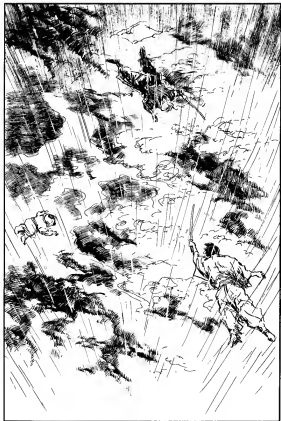
Child of the Fields	9
In These Small Hands	70
Kaii Triumphant	130
The Last Cherry Blossoms	190
Stone Upon Stone	250
Glossary	309
Creator Profiles	311

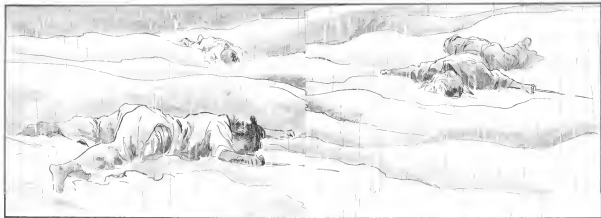
the hundred
and seventeenth

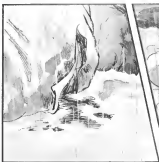
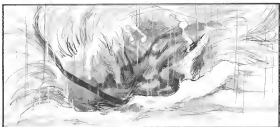
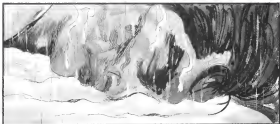


Child of the Fields

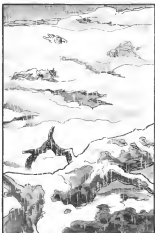




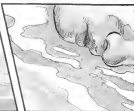


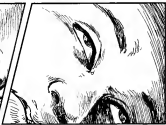






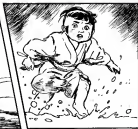


























THOSE
TWO
HANDS
WERE
DEVOID
OF
SENSATION.

FROST-
BITTEN.
THEY
COULD
HOLD
NOTHING.



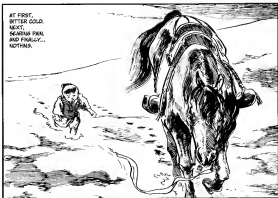
MORDED.
IT WAS A
MIRACLE
HE WAS
STILL
ALIVE.



THERE
WAS
NO
PAIN.

IN FROSTBITE,
INTENSE COLD
RESTRICTS
CIRCULATION
TO EXPOSED
FLESH, AND
THE SKIN
SEEMS TO
BREAK DOWN.

AT FIRST,
BITTER COLD.
NEXT,
SEARING PAIN,
AND FINALLY...
NOTHING.

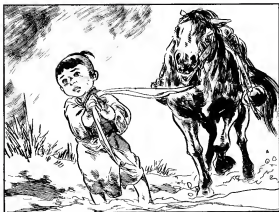


BY THEN,
THE SKIN ITSELF
TURNING BLUE.



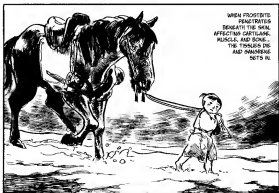
AND BLUE
WAS THE COLOR
OF THESE SMALL
HANDS.



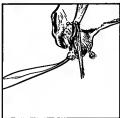


THE CHILD'S
FEET WERE
THE SAME.
HE FELT
NOTHING AS
HE WALKED.











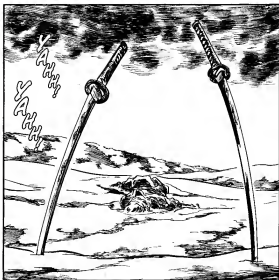




"MY SWORD AND
YOUR FATHER'S
SWORD WERE STUCK
IN THE EARTH.
THAT'S PROMISE
BETWEEN SANDRA."



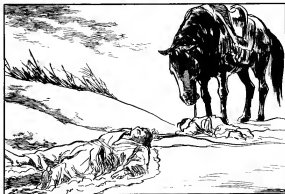












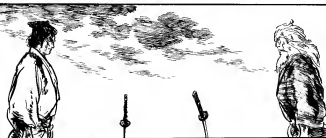




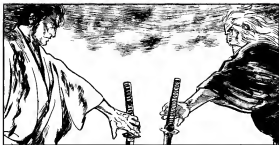
























YOUR
SON WILL
DIE WITHOUT
TREATMENT.



DESTINY.
FATE.

IF NO MEDDS
HELP FROM
OUR SANGRY...
HE'S ALREADY
DEAD.



HMM!
ISAP'T
TAK...?







THIS FOOL
RUINED OUR
BATTLE

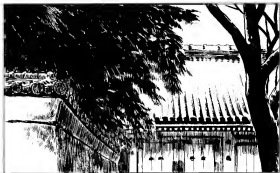
I'LL TAKE
HIM BACK TO THE
COMPOUND AND SEE
THAT HE PAYS. BUT...
HE'S ALSO THE ONLY
MAN WHO CAN
CURE US.



COME
WITH ME,
BECAUSE HE
IS OUR
COMMON
FOE...

...THOUGH
HIS BITES ARE
NO MORE THAN
THOSE OF A
FLEA.







I SEE
FACES...ITTO...
PETSUDO...
SO CLOSE

THAT'S RIGHT...
FELL OFF...
THE TEMPLE...



...I MUST
HAVE DIED,
TOO...

SO IF I
SEE THEIR
FACES...

AND
THIS IS
ABLE!









THOSE
WICKERS...
MY POISON...
AND THEY
JUST GET THE
SHAKERS?

THE
GODS MUST
LIKE 'EM,
DAMN!



LOOK AT
ME! I RARE
MY POISON TO
CRIPPLE THEM,
AND NOW I'M
MAKING ME
HATERS...?

THIS
DOESN'T
MAKE ANY
SENSE...

I'M JUST
PLANNING IN
CIRCLES...
SAY!



ALLOW
ME...





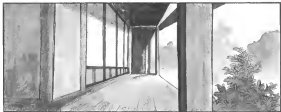


*the hundred and
eighteenth*

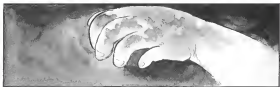
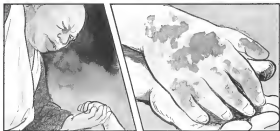
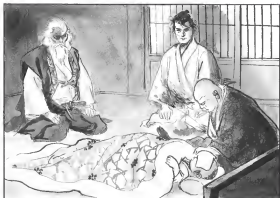
In These Small Hands

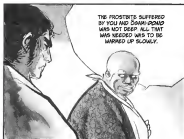
















BUT THE
PROSTITUTE...
MAY I MIGHT
CURE.



THESE
LITTLE
HANDS ARE
ROTTING

IF I SOAK
THE FLESH WITH
POISON, KILL THE
ROT... THEN, JUST
MAYBE...



BUT...

I KNOW YOU, IT
IS A DELICATE BALANCE
TO KILL THE ROT AND
NOT THE FLESH... IT COULD
BACKFIRE! PROSTITUTE OR
POISON... HIS FINGERS
COULD PROP OFF
ONE BY ONE.



YOUR
WIFE, CHAI-
RONDO?

DO IT.









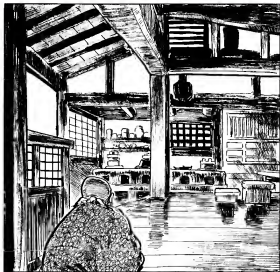






















IS IT GOD
TO SEE US
COOK? HAVE
FIRE?

ENTERTAINING
KAY? CAN'T TEAR
YOURSELF
AWAY?



N...
NO, SIR...
I...



WE KNOW
HOW TO COOK
AND BUILD FIRES
BECAUSE WE'RE
JESSE, KAY



NH...??



YOU THINK
IT'S *AMUSING*
FOR *BOOBY* TO
DO *HEAVIL*
LABOR

BOOBY SHOULD
FIGHT—NOT DO THE
WORK OF *SERVANTS*,
OF *WOMEN*,
YET?

...
YET?



BUT THEN...
WHO WOULD COOK
ON THE *SHITTE-
FLEET*?

BOOBY



OUR
SERVANT
HANDS LET
US DO
THIS

AND
YOUR'S *CHANT*?
SO YOU ARE
NOT *BOOBY*.



ALL YOU
CAN DO IS *FAKE*
POISON



NOW
GO MAKE
IT!!



WELL WHAT'S
CONSUMING
DAIGORO!!

YES!!



YES!!

OW...



















INCREDIBLE...
IT'S ACTUALLY IN
MY HANDS!

HEH...
THE GODS
ARE SMILING
WITH ME.















A SECRET
DOCUMENT,
WRITTEN WITH...
HIDDEN
LETTERS?

AMAZING...
JUST AMAZING...
AND THE
CONTENT'S—
SHOCKING!



BUT...
WHAT KIND
OF WORK?

THESE TRACES...
THEY LOOK FAMILAR...
I'VE SEEN THEM
SOMEWHERE...



SILKWORKS!
THAT'S IT! I'VE
SEEN THESE MARKS
ON MULBERRY
LEAVES!



SO...THE YAKUZA
LETTERS ARE LEFT BY
SILKWORKS, CRAWLING
THROUGH PAPER?



NEE
NEE NEE
NEE!

WHEE NEE NEE!
APRIL! ALL THE
SUMMER, HERE IN
EDO FOR SUMMER
EDOM!

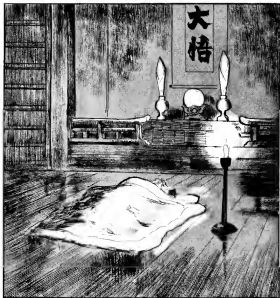


FEEL
IF I REVEAL
THIS LETTER
THAT...

BEHOLD
STUCK DOWN-
TOWARDS
CUTTING HIS
STOMACH!





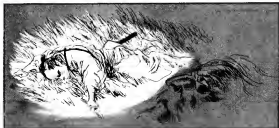






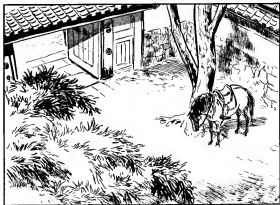
























NO MORE
CRUELTY
ANYMORE,
KAB!



NOT IF YOU
VALUE YOUR
LIFE!

YAAAAINEEE!!



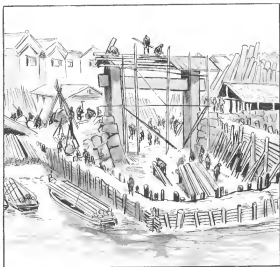




*the hundred and
nineteenth*

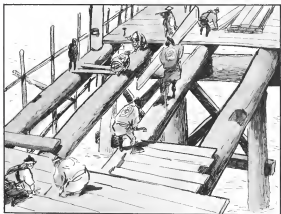
Kaïi Triumphant

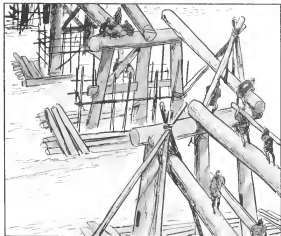
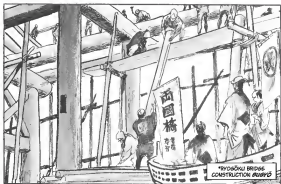


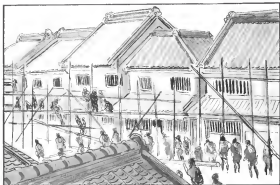


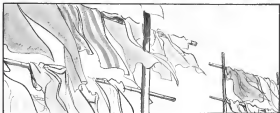


YOTA BRIDGE

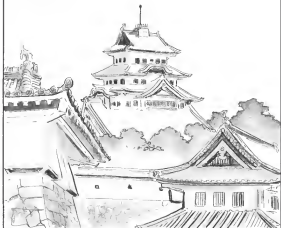


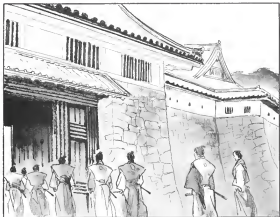






TEN DAYS HAD PASSED
SINCE THE TERRIBLE
FLOOD. EDO WAS
RETURNING TO LIFE.



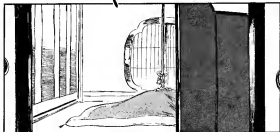


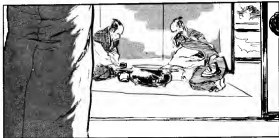




















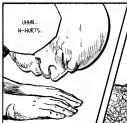












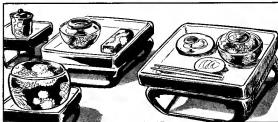




MY LORD...
TO FACE DOWN
ITTO REQUIRES
STRATEGY

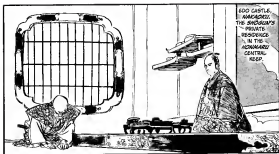




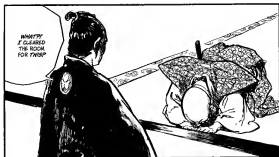




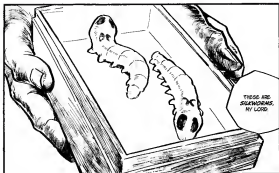


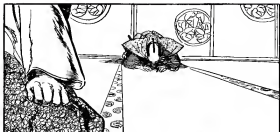


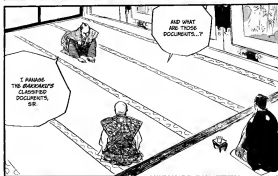














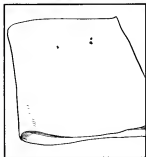


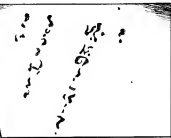




















SO RETSUDDO-SAMA KNOWS AND CAN COUNTER EVERY POLITICAL MOVE.

HE USES AMM'S SECRETS TO BLACKMAIL AND DESTROY.

THAT'S ALL FEAR HIM AND TREAT HIM AS THE TRUE RULER OF THE LAND.



FORGIVE ME, MY LORD, BUT ... SOME SAY HE'S MORE POWERFUL THAN KONG.

THE SAMURAI HAVE STRUGGLED TO LEARN THIS SECRET.

BUT AMM? TAMOSH!



SECRET

THAT'S THE URA-YAMOTO'S ANGER! I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THESE LEFTIES, BUT RETSUDDO REPORTS TO ME!



DOES HE REPORT EVERYTHING, MY LORD? ONLY RETSUDDO-SAMA KNOWS.





TRULY,
THE YAMU
CREST BEHOLD
MY LORD'S OWN
HOLYMOCKY

CAN THEY BE
MORE DISLOYAL?
SHOW GREATER
CONTEMPT!



HEH...



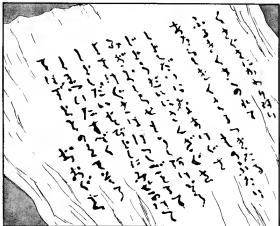
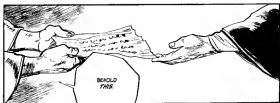
THEY USE YOUR
SO-CALLED FOR THEIR
OWN SECRET LETTERS
SO MUCH FASTER AND
SAFER...

THE YAMU
PUT THEIR INTERESTS
AHEAD OF MY LORD'S
HOW ELSE COULD THEY
EVER CONCERN
OF THEM?



HEH...









THAT WAS SENT BY ITAKURA
JOSHIMORI LAST YEAR, FOUR DAYS
BEFORE HE FELL ILL. FIVE DAYS
LATER HE WAS DEAD. MY LORD
REMEMBERS IT WELL. I
AM SURE.



THEN
ITAKURA
IS DEAD...?

CLOSE TO
KATSUOKURA
SUO-NO-KAMI-SAMA,
KILLED BY A BLOW
FROM RITSUDO'S
STAFF?

THE END OF VOL. 12



AND SUO-
SAMA, MY LORD,
WAS CLOSE TO
DEATH ITTO.



THE FORTUNE
IN MY LORD'S HANDS
WAS SPENT BY CHAN
ITTO. I RECOVERED IT
AT GREAT RISK TO
MY LIFE.



WERE
I BLACK OF HEART,
I MIGHT HAVE HIDDEN IT,
AND FORCED THE YAKU
TO SURRENDER THEIR
POWER TO ME.

BUT
BECAUSE OF
MY DISOBEYANCE
TO YOU, MY
LORD...

I HAVE
ALWAYS PRIZED
YOUR LOYALTY,
TAMOSHI.





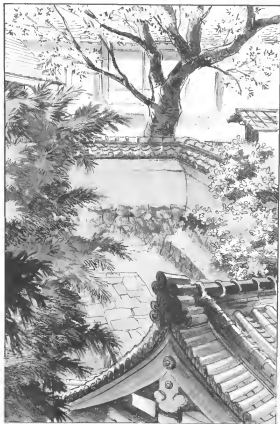




*the hundred and
twentieth*

The Last Cherry Blossoms









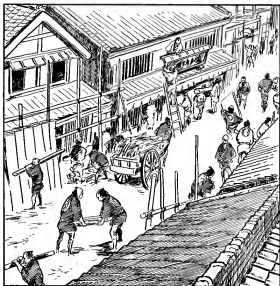












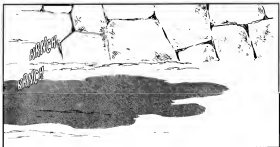


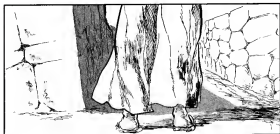
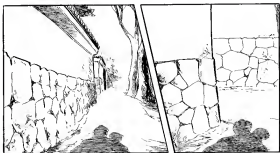






















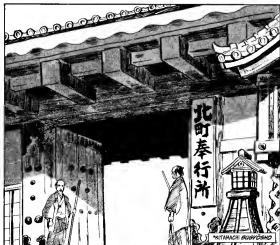






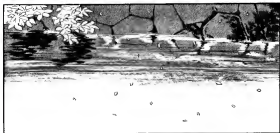


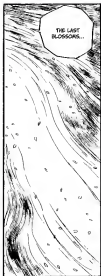




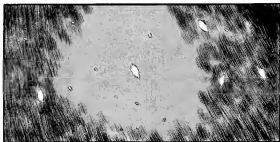






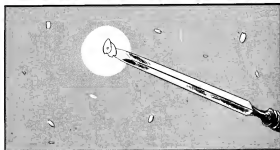


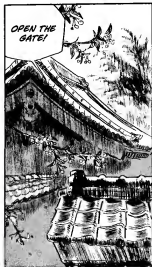






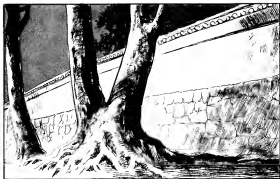


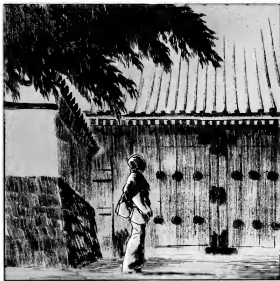




























FIRST...
I GO TO THE
CASTLE AT DAWN.
IF I-LIKE YOUR
FATHER-DO NOT
RETURN...



...GO TO THE
MOUNTAIN AT
NOON

THE
FORMER KID
KATSUMASA ODAKI
ITTO AND HIS SON
DAIGORO WILL
BE THERE.



TELL
ODAKI
ITTO...

"PERHAPS,
SHOGUN"

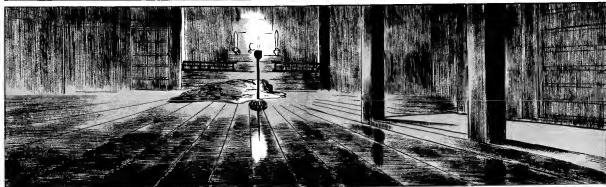
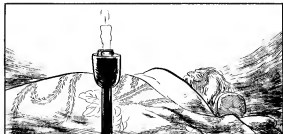


"PERHAPS
SHOGUN"...?

SIR, WHAT
DOES IT
MEAN?















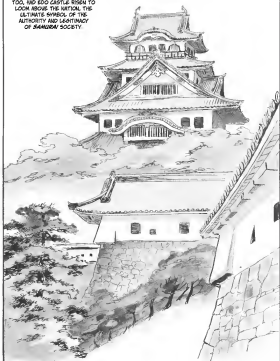


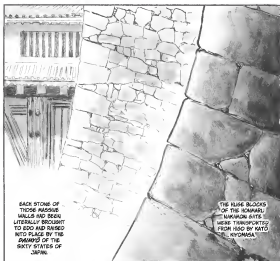
*the hundred and
twenty-first*

Stone Upon Stone



ISYASU, HIDEYOSU, ISHITSU
IT HAD TAKEN THREE GENERA-
TIONS OF TOKUGAWA SHOGUNS
FIFTY YEARS TO COMPLETE EDO
CASTLE. AS THE TOKUGAWA
HAD LAID THE CORNERSTONES
OF POLITICAL DOMINATION, SO,
TOO, HAD EDO CASTLE RISEN TO
LOOM ABOVE THE NATION, THE
ULTIMATE SYMBOL OF THE
AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY
OF SAMURAI SOCIETY.



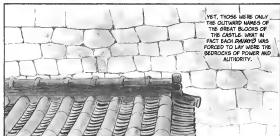
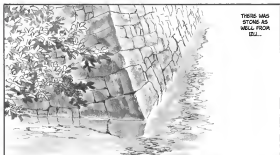


BACK STONE OF
THOSE PASSAGE
WALLS HAD BEEN
LITERALLY BROUGHT
TO EDO AND RAISED
INTO PLACE BY THE
DWARF OF THE
SIXTY STATES OF
JAPAN.

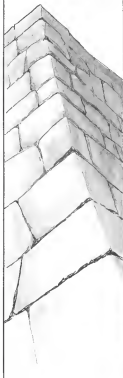
THE HUGE BLOCKS
OF THE HONNAN
MARRON BATS
WERE TRANSPORTED
FROM HMO BY KATO
RYOMASA



THE DWARF OF
SANSOKU IN THE
WEST BROUGHT
THE BEAUTIFUL
WHITE STONE
OF SETTSU



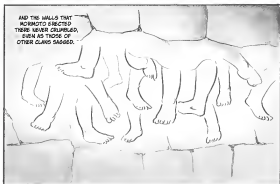
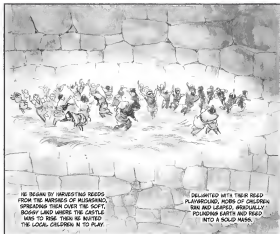
THE POWER AND
AUTHORITY OF
THE TOKUWANA
CLAN



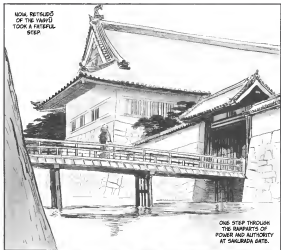
THE FINEST CASTLE
ARCHITECTS WED TO
PROVE THEIR SKILLS
ON THE CASTLE
WALLS.



HOOROTO: SHINJI, KATO
CLAN CONSTRUCTION MASTER,
WAS ASSIGNED THE KIBA
BATTLEMENTS, AND THE
EIGHTY SAKURADA GATES.



NOW, RETAILED
OF THE YAMU
TOOK A FIERCE
STEP



ONE STEP THROUGH
THE BARRIERS OF
POWER AND AUTHORITY
AT SAKURADA GATE.

2-40-0000 (30X THIRTY A.M.)
[THE GATES OPENED]
4-00-0000 (30X P.M.)
THE GATES CLOSED, THROUGH
THOSE GATES...











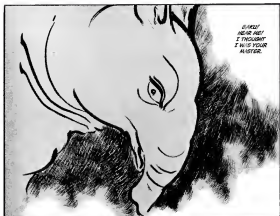
EDO CASTLE.
NARAKOJI:
THE
SHOGUN'S
SLEEPING
QUARTERS



SHAME, YOU SPIRIT BEAST,
MYTHICAL EATER OF DREAMS.
YOU LIVE IN OUR LORD'S
CHAMBERS, EATING THE
DREAMS OF SHOGUN.



HOW MANY DREAMS
DREAMS HAVE YOU EATEN,
SHAME? HOW MANY HAVE
YOU SENT TO THEIR
DEATH?



*BARKU!
HEAR ME!
I THOUGHT
I WAS YOUR
MASTER.*



*FOR MORE THAN FIFTY
YEARS, MY GARDEN HAS
BROUGHT ME THE SECRETS
OF THE HARE, AND I TO
GENERATIONS OF
SHODON.*

*THAT WAS HOW
YOU ATE, BARKU.
THAT WAS WHY I
THOUGHT MYSELF
YOUR MASTER,
FEEDING YOU.*

AND NOW
YOU WANT
TO EAT MY
DREAMS?

YOUR
MOTHER'S
DREAMS,
BASTARD!



EAT THEM, AND
THE NATION WILL
FEEL LIKE STEAM.
YOU MAY NEVER
JAGHAT HAVE
DREAMS TO EAT,
BASTARD.



AND STILL
YOU THINK
TO GORRUS
MOMENT?

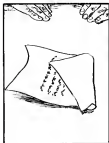
YOU SHALL
NOT KISS
THEIR, BASTARD
NEVER!













AS THE SHOGUNATE'S
SO-MAGISTRATE, THE YAMATO
CONTROL THE DAIKYO. ONE
NEEDS SOLID PROOF
BEFORE ACCUSING
MY CLAN



I AM PUZZLED
TO BE TREATED AS
THOUGH WE DISRESPECT
OUR LORD, ON THE BASIS
OF SOME ANIMATED
SCRIPT...



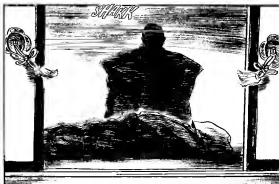
WHO ELSE
COULD DO
THISTY



THIS ONE,
FOOT























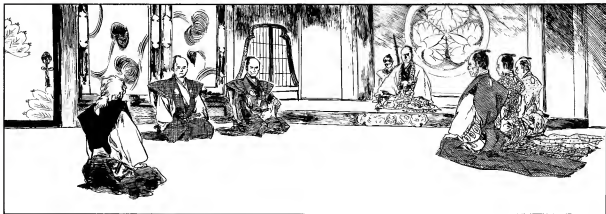
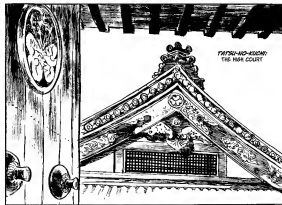
THUS HE
BROUGHT YOU
TO HIS QUARTERS,
TO SETTLE THIS
QUEST.

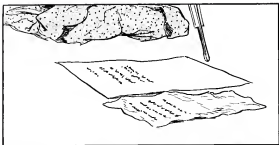
OUR LORD
WELLES YOU
HIGHLY.

























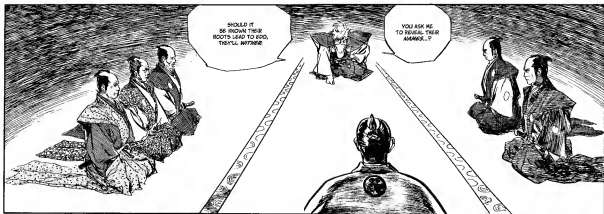
MY LORD...THE NATIONS-
ARMY WE'RE SENT TO THE
SIXTY STATES OF JAPAN IN
THE TIME OF MY GRANDFATHER
SOSUKE, AT THE COMMAND OF
YOUR HONORED ANCESTOR,
REYASU-KI!

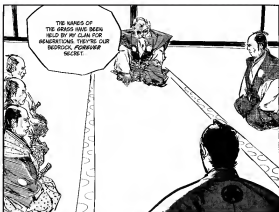
THEY ARE
THE SEEDS
CULTIVATED FOR
GENERATIONS!



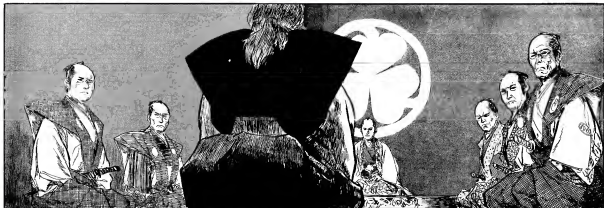
IN TIME OF
CRISIS, THE SECRET
SHOGU TROOPS OF
THE TONGUHAN!

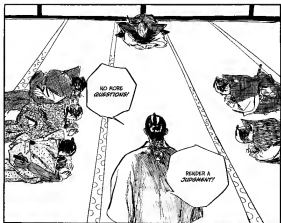
THEY ARE
THEIR JAMES TO
FIND THE NATION'S
SECRETS.







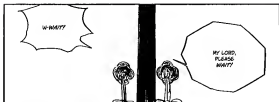
























GLOSSARY

ayame-zuki

A coming-of-age celebration.

bakka

The government. The shōgun, his councilors, and his senior officials.

bushi

A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

bushidō

The way of the warrior. Also known as *shudō*.

daimyō

A feudal lord.

Edo

Edo was a castle town, that rose up around the moats and ramparts of Edo castle, the stronghold of the Tokugawa clan. The central core of the city, administered by the *mach-bugyō* city commissioner, who reported directly to the shōgun's senior councilors, and was demarcated on official maps by a black line, the *kirebiki*, and was called the *go-furui*.

enishi

A fateful, chance connection between two people.

gojō-bako

A lacquered, waterproof box used to carry official correspondence between the shōgunate in Edo and its regional officials.

go-rōjū

Inner circle of councilors directly advising the shōgun ("go" is used as an honorific term).

Goetsu Dōshū

Chinese fable in which two bitter enemies ride in the same boat to reach the other bank of a river.

han

A feudal domain.

honorifics

Japan is a class and status society, and proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes *o* and *go*, and a wide range of suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in *Love Wolf and Cuck*:

chan – for children, young women, and close friends

dono – archaic; used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures

san – the most common, used among equals or near-equals

sama – used for superiors

sensei – used for teachers, masters, respected entertainers, and politicians.

ihai

A Buddhist mortuary tablet. The death name of the deceased, given after they die, is written on the tablet, which is kept at the family temple.

jōdai

Castle warden. The ranking *han* official in charge of a *daimyō*'s castle and *han* when the *daimyō* was in Edo. Often the *jōdai* was also the senior elder, or *karō* of the *han*.

kōgi kaishakunin

The shōgun's own second, who performed executions ordered by the shōgun.

kuchiyaku

Kuchiyaku were the tasters for the shōgun family. They were called *kuchiyaku*, or "official mouths," because they checked for poison with their own tongues.

machi-bugyō

The Edo city commissioner, combining the post of mayor and chief of police. A post held in monthly rotation by two senior Tokugawa vassals, in charge of administration, maintaining the peace, and enforcing the law in Edo. Their rule extended only to commoners; samurai in Edowere controlled by their own *daimyō* and his officers. The *machi-bugyō* had an administrative staff and a small force of armed policemen at his disposal.

machikata

Town policemen.

meifumadō

The Buddhist Hell. The way of demons and damnation.

mohhh!

This is a palace convention, signaling the shōgun's next activity.

rōnin

A masterless samurai. Literally, "one adrift on the waves." Members of the samurai caste who have lost their masters through the dissolution of *han*, expulsion for misbehavior, or other reasons. Prohibited from working as farmers or merchants under the strict Confucian caste system imposed by the Tokugawa shōgunate, many impoverished *rōnin* became "hired guns" for whom the code of the samurai was nothing but empty words.

sankin kōtai

The Tokugawa required that all *daimyō* spend every other year in Edo, with family members remaining behind when they returned to their *han*. This practice increased Edo's control over the *daimyō*, both political and fiscal, since the cost of maintaining two separate households and traveling to and from the capital placed a huge strain on *han* finances.

shidō

Bushidō. The way of the warrior.

shoshidai

The *shoshidai* was the shōgun's emissary to the imperial court in Kyoto.

sō-metsuke

Chief inspector. The supreme law-enforcement officer of the shōgunate.

KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Love Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies; written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays; and mentored some of Japan's best manga talents.

Love Wolf and Cub was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kozure Ōkami*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and reprinted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1973, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Annihilation* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman*, the manga Koike created with artist Ryōichi Ikegami, was

produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Gekiga Senjuku*, a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Batman 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear: "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.



GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kami-akibai*, or “paper-play” narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kashi-ise* market, bookstores that rented out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kashi-ise* readers.

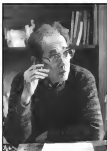
In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Dojinki*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series.

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Sewer*

Osamu (*Love Wolf and Cub*). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the “golden duo” and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.





2002 HARVEY AWARD WINNER

■ BEST AMERICAN EDITION OF FOREIGN MATERIAL

■ BEST GRAPHIC ALBUM OF PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED MATERIAL

The true meaning of *bushido*, the warrior code, oozes from every page of this volume: a little boy desperately attempts to drag his roving father to safety, even if it costs him his own life; that same wandering samurai and his mortal enemy work together to save the frostbitten fingers of the same little boy, knowing they will eventually match swords again in a battle to the death; another samurai bites his own tongue, killing himself and locking a dark secret in his grave. The code of the samurai is complex and rich with irony, which is why so few carry this code through life. But as we draw closer to the conclusion of this epic struggle, the true *bushi* are stepping forth and showing their colors. It will be a fight to the finish. So, in these final days, a *ronin* and his young boy will visit the grave of their murdered wife and mother. It just might be the last spring the two will share, like the many petals falling from branches.

"The art style is more reminiscent of traditional Japanese scroll paintings than the 'big eyes and speed lines' aesthetic associated with contemporary manga, and the series deserves its reputation as a classic."

— Roger Sabin
The Observer, UK

Published for the first time in America in the Japanese format.



子連れ狼

Front cover artwork by
MATT WAGNER